





# MEDICAL MEN AND MEDICINE IN EARLY YEARS IN WESTERN CANADA.

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Paper read before the Winnipeg
Medical Society (Sept. 17, 1915)



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#### MEDICAL MEN AND MEDICINE IN HARLY YEARS IN WESTERN CANADA

Mr. President and Gentlemen:

read before an historical society rather than before a Medical Association. My unearthed facts rarely include medical phenomena or surgical data, but rather the works of the doctor in fields outside the purely professional arena. I can only claim two reasons for leniency; first, that the burden was placed on my shoulders by your President; and second, that I have not been able to find a single book, not even a single paper, on any medical subject by a pioneer of our profession.

I mean by Western Canada, the land from the Western shore of the Hudson's Bay to the Pacific Ocean, and from the 49th parallel to the Arctic Ocean. The history of this area is largely that of the great Fur Companies until times too recent to be taken in our purview. The field is vast but the literature open to my investigation in Winnipeg is small. The archives locked in London, Paris and Ottawa could not be used in the few months devoted to this paper.

The books which can be consulted are written from the standpoint of discovery, of exploration, of development or of settlement. The references to the physician are few and far between and are not to his scientific work but to his meagre pay and to his varied duties. The only doctors mentioned usually are those who performed services in fields entirely outside their professional work. You must, therefore, pardon me if the facts I recite are largely political, commercial, social or scientific --i.e. scientific in such fields as botany, zoology, geology, meteorology and geography. Let me give you just one instance. In a book of over six hundred pages written by a Viscount and a Doctor, there are two medical references, one to a slight sickness of one of the crew, and the other to a bacchanalian orgy arranged by a doctor for those transcontinental travellers in which all and several became more rather than less hilarious. The dinner was held in the private hospital of the host and the only patient at the time as screened off in one corner. The landlady of a neighboring inn was commandeered as the culinary "Goddess of the Feast" and woman-like she succeeded in not only having the last but also immumerable words in this truly Western celebration.

Bay. Although Henry Hudson discovered the Strait and explored the Bay in 1610, no effort was made to form any settlement on its shores until after the middle of the seventeenth century. The exact date on which Radisson and Grosselllers found their way from Lake Superior to the Great Inland Sea is not accurately known. We do know that, appreciating the magnificant field which the Bay offered as a basis for fur trading they tried to form a Parisian company to exploit his promising nova terra. Meeting with repulse, they went to London and secured sufficient influence

to outfit a voyage of adventure. The successful issue of this trial trip led to the formation of "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into the Hudson's Bay" in 1670. This Company has continued to this day in transacting a vigorous and successful business in all the country of our present outlook.

I find great diffuculty in securing a reference to the presence of any doctor in the earlier periods of their trading enterprises. For one hundred years they had no posts away from the shores of the Bay. It is probable that some at least of the boats that plied back and forth carried a surgeon as part of the crew but whether any one of these remained on shore between voyages is doubtful. (Peter Romulus was surgeon in voyages 1668-1670). Occasionally a boat could not return the same year it came out and in 1772 we have a record of Mr. Hutchins, a surgeon, at York Factory amputating toes and fingers for frost-bite. Umfreville an ex-H. B. employee claims that in 1769 the Company had only 315 employees -- 75 on sea and 240 on land and it is not likely that in so small a number scattered over an immense oceanic and terresterial area that much consideration was given to the medical care of their men. In the smallpox epidemic which swept the country in 1781 there was no medical aid for the Indians. Medicines were supplied in all outgoing cargoes but were used entirely by priests and laymen. Caster-oil was the chief drug supplied even as late as 1867 and Perry Davis' Pain Killer was in great demand when liquor was not for sale at the Forts. Isaac Cowie says each

Hudson's Bay Factory of Fort had a Governor, a Second in Command, and a surgeon, the three forming a council for the district. But Bishop Anderson in his testimony before a Committee of the British House of Commons in 1857 said "There is a Medical Officer at York, one at Moose, and one or two at Red River Settlement". Before the same Committee Sir George Simpson stated that they had a supply of medicine at all Forts, and Dr. Ree claimed the H. B. Company had hospitals for sick and infirm Indians. The latter statement however is denied by old H. B. officers and by the fur traders who visited the Forts. It was possibly founded on a letter from the Governor of the Company which was laid before the British Parliament in 1842. This stated that old and sick Indians had free treatment at the posts and grandiloquently wrote, "Every Trading Establishment is an Indian Hospital". The H. B. employees however were the only prescribers and anateur surgeons.

That a surgeon was sometimes to be found at a post is shown by the following incidents which I have met in my reading. In 1773 an Indian who had his nose bitten off in a drunken orgy brought the missing organ the following day to York Factory to have it replaced by the surgeon. In 1683 when the English recaptured the Fort at Albany (James Bay) from the French its sole occupant was a prisoner chained in the cellar and in an indescribable state of filth. He had been there for months because of murdering the surgeon and the priest and of the absence of any court to try him. In 1872 when Ia Perouse seized Fort Nelson the

English Governor, in order to fortify himself to surrender without firing a shot, applied to the surgeon for a glass of rum. Medical comforts,
you see, were an early prerogative of the profession. I am glad to add
that the surgeon urged defence of the Fort, but without avail.

Whether the H. B. ships in early days carried surgeons or not I have been unable to discover. The first party of settlers sent out by Lord Selkirk to found his Red River Colony had a Mr. Edwards as surgeon on ship board but he did not come farther than York Factory. Apparently no doctor accompanied the second party, but Peter LeSerre took medical charge of the third group of emigrants. Typhus or Typhoid broke out during the voyage and led to the landing of the colonists at Fort Churchill. During the ensuing winter La Serve and seven others died from the fever. In the next ship came Dr. James White. He studied medicine at Edinburgh University and for two years was Assistant Surgeon on H. M. S. Beagle. In 1814 he was appointed Surgeon to the H. B. Co., and stationed at the Red River Settlement. His pay was fifty pounds per annum, with lodging and subsistence and a grant of 500 acres of land after three years service. He was Acting Governor when the settlers went to Jack River (Norway House) and were driven out by the North-West Company's servants. He had been shot at in Fort Douglas that summer but escaped injury. He returned with Governor Semple to the Settlement and was one of the victims of the massacre at Seven Caks on June 19, 1816. Semple evidently had no high opinion of Dr.

White as he characterized him as "unfit for command" and "a slave to liquor". A Dr. Wilkinson also was killed at Seven Oaks. He is described as private secretary to Governor Semple.

Abel Edwards, Surgeon, was one of those named by Lord Selkirk to receive the land grant from the H. B. Co., in 1811. On his way through Eastern Canada he was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Indian Territories by the Governor of Quebec. He was present at the official declaration of possession by Selkirk's representatives on the banks of the Red River on Sept. 4, 1812. No further reference to him comes to notice so that his stay here was probably short.

The H. B. Co., improved in their estimate of the value of professional services for in 1823 we find the following instruction sent to Capt. R. Pelly, Governor of the R. R. Settlement. "Mr. Cuddie to remain as surgeon for another year at 150 pounds per amnum and 50 pounds allowance for board and lodging". He had however to furnish his own drugs, but was given the right of collecting fees from any patients not in the employ of the Company.

In the minutes of the meeting of the Northern Department H. B. Co., held each year either at Norway House or Fort Garry we find grants to surgeons, surveyors and teachers but the number of the medical fraternity is painfully small. Jesuits, Recollets, Sulpicians and Episcopalians were numerous, but the disciples of Aescuhapius were few and far between. I cannot give the names of the H. B. Co's medical officers and even if the

list could be furnished it would be barren as no record of their work is extant.

In answer to repeated requests from the Red River settlers a Council was formed in 1835 to control the local affairs of the District of Assiniboia —a territory including all land within a radius of fifty miles of the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. All members were appointed by the Board of Governors in London. This Council was the legislative and administrative body from 1835 to 1870. Its powers and duties ceased when Canada annexed Rupert's Land. A number of its members are worthy of notice in this paper. I have been able to find no record of doctors in practice so have to use references to the work which they performed in other fields of labor.

Dr. John Bunn, a native of the country, but educated in Scotland, was for many years the principal medical practitioner in the colony. A man evidently of both energy and ability, he was for twenty-six years the most active member of the Council of Assiniboia. The confidence reposed him is shown by the offices which at different times were conferred upon him. Indeed he appears as an early Pooh-Bah monopolizing all the available honors and positions. He was H. B. surgeon, commer, shariff, clerk of the court, recorder (that is, Judge), governor of the goal, acting president of the Council, etc., etc. Like all wise physicians he was a free-trader and not only had drugs and church bills put on the free list but also opposed an import duty on animals and grains. He died suddenly from apoplexy in 1861 and was lamented by the whole community.

Dr. William Cowan, born and educated in Scotland, care out as an H. B. surgeon and was enjaged at different posts of the Company. He was appointed a majistrate for the Red River Settlement in 1852 and was a nember of the Council of Assiniboia from 1853, occupyin various positions under that body such as auditor, chairman of the Board of Works, etc. The liquor question was then as today the source of much discussion. The Council had to deal with the rights of suggests and anothecaries to sell alcoholic liquors, while a prolonged fight was carried on to revent the sale of liquor on Christmas and Good Friday. Dr. Cowan was Chief Trader in charge of Fort Garcy in 1869 at the outbreak of the first Riel Rebellion. The Fort was well supplied with munitions, gu s, cannon, powder, shot, and shells but was taken by rebels without any effort to defend it. Dr. Cowan has had, rightly or wron ly, pleced upon his shoulders the blame for the continuance of the outbreak as there is no doubt that without the large supplies of all kinds secured in the Fort the rising would have early collapsed. Dr. Cowan was several times arrested by Riel but soon released. He practised in Winnipe; after the rebellion and was in 1879 Chairman of the organization meeting of the Historical and Scientific Society and its first Vice-President. He left the city later and died, I believe, somewhere in the United States.

Curtis J. Bird, was a native of Augert's Land but educated in Edinburgh. He was in active practice here for many years and e idently successful. He was a proper in 1861, her her of the Countil of Assimiboia

in 1868, and member of Riel's Provisional Convention which met in November, 1869. He was one of the representatives of the English settlers elected to try to come to a working agreement with the French Half-Breed. He was honored with an election in 1871 to the first Legisloture of the Province of Munitoba and was Speaker of the House in 1875. He is reported to have been the Beau Brunnel of the city but is fine clothes and hamdsome face did not save him from indignity. The government became unpopular and an unruly mob seized the doctor as a shining light and treated him to tar and feat ers. His latter, James Bird, was an influential member of the Council of Assimiboic in its saulier days while his mother was a teacher in McCallun's Academy now St. John's School. The Doctor died while on a visit to En land in 1876.

Besides Dr. Cowan four other doctors were prisoners of Riel in Fort Carry in 1867--70. Dr. J. H. C'Donnell with his wife and two children was on his way to this district when Riel blocked the road and denied admission to new comers. Mr. Fonseca, an old resident of the Red River, agreed to take the family through the barriers but success demanded the sacrifice of the Doctor's black Dundreary whiskers and the enrobing of his athletic frame in native-made jacket, cap, belt and mocassins. Dr. O'Donnell took an active inter at not only in professional work but also in all public affairs. He was on the first Board of Directors of the Winniber General Hospital and one of the

O'Donnell, Lynch and Jackes, formed the first stark of the Mospital.

Dr. James Lynch care in 1868 with Engineer Snow who was to lay out a road from the Red River to the North-West Angle. At the commencement of the Rebellion Col. Dennis authorized Dr. Lynch to raise a company of English Canadians at Fort Jarry. There was no delay in the enlistment; no street parades, no brass bands, and no fervent speeches were required to fill the ranks, but unfortune tely the ruling polens are unable to furnish shoes or shot and no military gloss was used.

Mesides work in the hospital Dr. Lynch did active ser ice in steming out addenics. He had charge in the smallpox authoral at Girli in 1.70 and was a me ber of the Salitary Board of the District of Reewatin formed to deal with infectious diseases along the Indians. He died in the W. G. M. from septicaemia— a true centleran in appearance, in manner and in spirit.

Dr. A. G. Jackes, was one of the suite of the Mon. W.

McDougall who came to the boundary line to become first Governor of

Lamitoba but returned to ontario— a sadder and wiser can. The Doctor

with his athletic reams and maritial spirit recused to retrace his

steps and me find him practising at Portage la Prairie. He evidently

had financial as well as professional ability for the first assessment

rol in Portage la Prairie shows him possessed of considerable real

estate, (probably mortgaged). He moved to Winnipeg in the early seven
ties and enjoyed the confidence of a large clientele. He accompanied

the commissioners who arranged treaties with the Indians at various points. He was a witness to the signatures to the Lake Winnipeg Treaty in 1875 and secretary to the Commission in 1876 when Treaty was made at Forts Carlton and Pitt.

Dr. E. Benson came in December 1874 and by his geniality, kindness and sense of humor endeared himself to a large circle. He was for many years coroner for the city, giving excellent service because of his good judgment and thorough honesty. He took a great interest in elucation, was a member and for several years Chairman of the School Board. His associates in practice miss his friendly smile, quiet joke and keen insight.

ernity in the early days of Winnipeg was undoubtedly John Christian Schultz. He was the storm centre, possibly the creator of hostilities, always ready, yes, even spoiling, for a right. No day could be dull while his massive bo y and energetic mind were given space and cause for action. Born in 1840 in Amherstburg, Ont., of Scandinavian descent, he studied medicine in Kingston and Toronto. His first trip West was made in 1860 when he joined a relative Mr. H. McKinney as a fur-trader against the Company. He went back to complete his course then settled permanently as a physician and druggist on the corner of Main St., and Water St., in the first brick building erected in this city. He had a strenuous life. His opposition to trade monopoly led him to purchase the Nor-

Wester the only newspaper of the settlement. The editorials were fiery, bold, aggressive and naturally aroused strong antagonism amon the H. B. Co's. supporters. As a sequal to a la suit the sherirf and bailiff attempted to seize his goods on Jan. 17, 1868 but he threw the sheriff out, knocked one bailiff down and locked the other in the store without food or fuel. He them delivered himself up at the goal. Here he was overcome by superior numbers and tightly bound but by the aid of friends gained his freedom before the night was over, incidentally doing violent damage to the goal doors. He was taken prisoner by the Sioux Indians in 1862 when travellin through Minnesota and was only released by proving that he as a British and not an American subject. Riel placed cannon in front of his store in 1869 and threatened to blow it to pieces. Even after his surrender he was placed in solitary confinement in Fort Garry. Again he escaped and in spite of severe injury in scaling the wall, he reached Kildonan in safety. Riel announced in Feb., 1871 that Schultz was exiled forever, and if found in the country would be shot, and effered a reward for his capture dead or alive. All his goods were seized by the rebels. He made his way out of the country by walking on snow shoes from Fort Alexander to Duluth with one companion as guide and helper. He was once tried for perjury but honorably acquitted. Truly a varied experience for a young man.

In later life he obtained many honors, became first a member of the House of Commons, them of the Senate. He was Lieut. Governor of

Manitoba from 1888 - 1895 and graciously entertained the Canadian Medical Association at Government House in 1889. He was Knighted (K. C. M. G.) by Her Magesty Queen Victoria. A fearless, forcible speaker, a worker and, as I have already said, a fighter by choise, he always remained a firm friend and ardent advocate of all Western interests. He died while on a visit to Mexico in 1896.

If happy is the country that has no istory then on the medical side the Northwest Territories was a real elysium. From the fur traders we learn that epidemics of measles, of smallpox, of whomping cough, etc., were frequent and with enormous mortality but no doctor was at and to stay the ravages. As late as 1871, a Board of Health was formed to deal with small ox among the Indians in the Edmonton district. The members of this Board included ten clergymen and three H. B. officials and they appealed to the Lieutenant Governor of manitoba to send then a doctor. Rev. G. McDou all is authority for the statement that the nearest doctor was at Winnipeg one thousand miles away. Before a physician could reach the old H. B. Settlement there had been 3,500 deaths and the disease. itself had died out practically for want of more victims. Even in 1881 Hospital-Steward Holmes was in charge of a smallpox outbreak in the Qu'Appelle Valley as there was no doctor in the neighborhood. Dr. W. M. Mackay now living in Edmonton, volunteered in 1876 to proceed to Fort Simpson from York Factory to deal with an outbreak of a "constitutional disease" among the Indians. It took him a year to reach his patients.

Winter overtook him at Norway House and he had to wait for the summer brigade to secure conveyance to his destination. A retired Factor told me of a doctor being sent to a H. B. post to deal with an infectious disease prevalent among the Indians in the Mackenzie River District but before he could reach the Arctic Circle frost, faith or the vis medicatrix naturae had stamped out the epidemic.

The Pacific Coast seems always to have fared better in the way of medical help than the other parts of our field of study. The history, however, begins in cloom, for hoss in his book on "The Fur Traders of the Pacific Coast" states that the first doctor sent out jumped overboard, bored to death by the monotony of the long journey around Cape Horn; the second was sent East to be tried for murder, and the third committed suicide by shooting. Later there went he the Western sea a number of our profession who gained honor for himself and shed reflected glory on his confreres.

Dr. John McLaughlin was born in Riviere du Loup, Que., in 178. His fatter was Irish but his mother was a Fraser, a descendent of one of the Highland soldiers who settled in Quebec. The doctor was educated in Glasgow, and began his practice in the city of Quebec. An unfortunate affair with an officer of the Carrison over some question raised by the eternal feminine drove him to the woods. He joined the North-West Fur Company and rose rapidly in their service. He was Chief Trader at Sault Ste. Marie and Chief Factor both at Fort William and at Rainy River. He was seized by Lord Selkirk with his De Meuron Soldiers in 1816 at Fort

William and sent to Montreal for trial as an accomplice in the Seven Oaks tragedy and its preceding high-handed if not crimin I metions. He was released without bail. At the union of the two fur co panies in 1321 is name a pears in the Deed Poll as one of the Chief Factors of the new H. B. Co. In 1823 he as sent to the Pacific Coast in charge of the interests of the company in all the districts west of the Rockies and South of the Department of New Caledonia. His territory included Alaska, the shores of British Columbia, Vancouver Island as well as the area new known as the States of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana and California. He built a large fort, Vancouver, on the Columbia River one hundred miles from its mouth, nearly opposite the present City of Portland, where for twenty-one years he ruled the country with almost despotic power and in truly regal style. We can picture him, a fine Figure over six feet high with long prematurely white hair, a massive head, a full round face, clean-shaven, piercing blue e.es, tightly shut lins and square chin. When he was doing the honors to visitors at his Fort he would sit at the head of his table clad in full regalia with uno highland of was, and a negro maiter, behind him. He was fond of show but his control over his suborninates and his Indian Proteges was so firm and just that he was lo ed and trusted by all. His influence was so great that no Indian wars occurre: during his tenure of office. He was the author of his own downfall for he encouraged two movements which could only end disastrously to the fur trade. He started the Pugit Sound

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Agricultural Society to provide food surplies for the various trading establishments and to exchange with the Russians in Alaska for their furs. This venture incidentally proved the value of the land for grain production and cattle raising. His second mis-step in the eyes of the H. B. Co., was in aiding that succoring the emigrants who were drawn to the Western Coast as a result of his successful agricultural operations. A sinute of Council passed in Lordon in 1845 reads. "That Factor McLaughlin be instructed not to permit passage in any of the Company's craft to any stranger of whatever rank or profession he may be to or from any part of the country or Coast". But it was too late. The gates were forced open and a flood tide of emigrants invidated the land. As a result Dr. McLaughlin was relieved of his office and retired to Oregon City at the falls of the Williamette River where be resided until his death in 1859. This is not the place to discuss the boundary question but it is only just to state that the doctor always believed and hoped that the Columbia River would be Southern boundary of Pritish possessions, for all early settlements north of that river were made by British subjects. Although a strict disciplinarion Dr. McLaughlin was a man of breed benevolence, good practical sagacity and penetreting insight. He dominated the whole district during his tenure of office -- a great man too much neglected by our Camadian historians;

Drs. Gardiner, Tolmie, Kennedy and McLaughlin, Jr., were moved from post to post along the Coast acting not only in a professional

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capacity, but also as traders. The surgeons of the various naval exploratory expeditions made extensive studies of the geology, the flora and the fauna of the country.

#### ARCTIC EXPLORATION.

The list of those of our profession who have achieved renown in Arctic exploration is so large that I can only pick out one here and there for longer description. I have a large list of names but no particulars of accomplished work and so restrict a self to those who have done someting worth while. The first and second Franklin expeditions started from Fort Carry, traversed the country to the mouths of the Mackenzie and the Coppermine Rivers and explored the Coast Bast and West of these points. Dr. Richardson, second in command, conducted the exploration between the Mackenzie and the Coppermine. In Franklin's third expedition by boat through Lancaster Sound all of the voyageurs perished, including four surgeons and assistant surgeons. I have records of many surgeons who took part either in the whale fishing or in the post work but it would be useless to read out their names.

Drs. Richardson and Rae explored the Arctic Coast around the mouths of the MacKenzie and Copperaine Rivers in 1846 looking for any traces of the ill-fated Franklin expedition. Dr. John Ree, graduated M. D. Edinburgh 1835. He came to Hudson's Bay as ship's surgeon but decided to remain in the country for ten years. He was Hudson's Bay surgeon at Moose Factory in charge of the James Bay district. He was then sent by the Company to look for that fata morgana, the North-West

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passage, a sea route to India north of our continent. For eight years the doctor explored various parts of the Arctic coast partly hitherto ter a-incognita and partly nown areas which he recrossed in his search for Franklin. He was the first who ventured to depend on the Northern country for both food and fuel. This enabled his party. to travel with loads of but 50 or 60 lbs. each and thus cover long distances rapidly. In 1850 the English Government compissioned him to head a search party. With only four men he went from Fort Garry via the Coppermine River to the Coast and reached a point within forty miles of one of Franklin's abandoned boats, but unfortunately missed it. We returned to Fort Garry via the MacKenzie River. In 1887 he found the first traces of Franklin, thus gaining the reard of 10,000 nounds offered for whis service. His first incline of success came from finding an Estimo with a gold band which was stated to have been taken from the body of a dead white man. By farther search he secured articles bearing the initials or crests of fourteen officers or men of the Franklin errors. We next meet Dr. Rae as head of survey for a telegraph line from Fort Carry to the Pacific Coast then to meet a line carried through Siberia. In 1864 large quantities of material for this surpose were collected at Fort Carry but the success of the laying of an Atlantic cable but an end to this enterprise. Dr. Rae lectured in Winnipeg in Oct. 1882 before the Historical and Scientific Society giving a vivid description of his numerous voyages of exploration. He stated that there were no doctors

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at the H. B. posts but that a supply of medicine was sent regularly to all.

Though I omit mention of the many surgeons who took part in polar voyages it is of interest to state that Dr. Elisha Kane, who accompanied the first Erinnell expedition in search of Franklin and was leader of the second, held the record of the Farthest North for sixteen years and Dr. Fred A. Cook claimed to have reached the pole in 1908, before Perry.

Was sent from the Red River in 1831 to New Caledonia because as an eccentric he was dangerous in a settled community and could not do much harm in the most isolated H. B. district. Governor Simpson describes Dr. Hamblin as "the strangest compound of skill, simplicity, selfishness, extravagance, musical taste and want of courtesy that I ever fell in with". Dr. Hector had his ribs broken by a bucking broncho and named the adjoining mine Micking Horse. Dr. Helmchen who aannounced that he had been taught to administer physic whether he kille or cured and claimed that his proceedings were quire regular — was a little man with a big head and a big hat.

Various military contingents were sent to this country.

Lord Selkirk brought retired soldiers from the DeMeuron and Wattville regiment in 1817 with Surgeon Allen in charge of their welfare. Three hundred men of the 11th Royal Regiment were stationed here 1846-1848

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and one hundred and twenty members of the Royal Canadian Rifles were in Fort Garry from 1857 to 1861. The first Riel rebellion brought the 60th Rifles with Surg. Major Tonny and Asst. Surgeons Shaw, Robertson, and Chatteron. The Ontarion contingent had Br. Codd as surgeon and the Quebec men were cared for by Dr. Neilson. The several boundary commissions always had medical help at hand. Dr. Bigsby accompanied the British agents in 1823 who laid down the line from Lake Superior to the Lake of the Woods. The Commission to delimit the boundary from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains had Drs. Millman and T. J. W. Menzies attached. The medical history of the N. W. M. P. would afford much interesting data, but beyond the names of the medical officers from Jakes and Bell down to the present day nothing has been recorded worthy of special recital.

I stop here on personal recitals because I wish to make a few observations on Medical Legislation, Medical Schools and Hospitals.

The material that can be utilized is great but time presents any adequate discussion of farther individual work or powers.

Att. Chown





